



Summary of Draft Options

This highlights some of the 64 possible solutions to our transportation crisis developed by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation. The public is encouraged to review the options and provide comments by October 1, 2000. Final recommendations will be adopted in November. The full text of options is available on the Internet at www.brct.wa.gov or at any Washington State government publication depository library.

- **Address vehicle and freight traffic on the most heavily traveled routes through a mix of strategies.** Conduct computer analysis and seek public input to develop multiple solutions for high-traffic routes and corridors throughout the state. Strategies include: new roads, bridges, rail lines and transit services; freeway on-ramp metering; traffic signal timing; intersection improvements; HOV and transit lanes; park-and-ride lots; telecommuting; four-day work weeks; flexible work hours; and employer-paid transit passes. (*Option 1*)
- **Give regions the authority to plan, fund and construct projects to fix their own problems.** Regions of the state would be allowed to designate or create organizations to plan, fund and construct projects to meet their unique transportation needs and goals. Regional organizations could be: counties; groups of counties; groups of cities; transportation corridors; regional transportation planning organizations; metropolitan planning organizations; transit or transportation authorities; or other newly created entities. (*Options 32, 33 & 52*)
- **Establish transportation goals and benchmarks.** Track progress on specific transportation goals and benchmarks, and hold government officials accountable to achieving them. Goals include: zero percent of roadways in poor condition; all bridges will be seismically safe; congestion and delay at or below national average; vehicle miles traveled per capita will not increase; non-auto share of commuter trips will increase; fatal accidents will decline; and air quality will meet federal standards. (*Options 7-11, 14 & 15*)
- **Establish efficiency goals and benchmarks.** Monitor government efficiency by developing specific goals and measures. Goals include: efficiency of state, regional and local transportation agencies will be at the national average in the short term and in the top 25% in the longer term; and public transit operating costs will be at the peer group median. (*Options 12, 13 & 18*)
- **Make maintenance and safety the top priorities for investment.** Maintain the existing transportation infrastructure at least to a uniform minimum standard across the state. Use cost-effective repaving schedules to maintain and preserve roadways. Institute a uniform transportation data collection system for all areas to ensure accurate and comparable information on traffic, pavement and bridge conditions. (*Option 2*)
- **Use better and more durable materials for road construction.** Advances in research are leading to stronger pavement and concrete that can extend the life of roads, thus reducing maintenance and preservation costs. Where it is cost effective, require a higher pavement standard in high-traffic areas. (*Option 24*)
- **Phase in a studded tire ban to reduce roadway maintenance and replacement costs.** Studies show a typical 30,000-mile studded tire will destroy between one-half and three-quarters of a ton of asphalt during its useful life. The cost of roadway replacement is at least \$8–\$15 per studded tire, and if pavement adjacent to the rutted lane is also replaced, costs can soar to \$40–\$50 per studded tire. (*Option 25*)
- **Ensure that new developments are planned well and have adequate transportation options.** Require new business and residential developments to meet growth management requirements for transportation

infrastructure. Provide incentives for ‘smart growth’ to combat suburban sprawl and create more compact developments that are pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented and less dependent on cars and roads. (*Option 3*)

- **Require a strict ordinance for utility cuts on roads and streets to reduce damage.** Develop a model ordinance for cities and counties to adopt, including provisions such as: expedited permits for joint trenching; multi-year waiting periods for companies not willing to joint trench; prohibiting work during peak traffic hours; and required repaving of larger sections of affected roadways instead of minimal patching. (*Option 26*)
- **Provide adequate funding for maintenance, preservation and safety at all levels of government.** Provide adequate funding for the basic operation and maintenance of roadways, public transit, ferries, passenger and freight rail services, and trip reduction programs for state, regional and local governments. Funding would keep pace with inflation. (*Options 27-29*)
- **Consider the use of managed competition for operations and maintenance functions.** Seek private sector bids for operations and maintenance activities, then compare to bids from public sector staff currently performing these services. Award contract to the most competitive bid. Changes to existing state law would be required. (*Option 36*)
- **Limit administrative and overhead costs of state, regional and local transportation agencies.** Cap administrative costs at 10% of an agency’s budget for management, general services, planning, facilities and training. Monitoring and reporting functions would be required. (*Option 19*)
- **Authorize and encourage jurisdictions to share resources.** Consolidate overlapping functions; merge departments; and share equipment, personnel, and other resources, such as technology and practices. Change existing law to permit the sharing of resources among jurisdictions and eliminate restrictions. (*Option 37*)
- **Use the private sector to deliver projects and transportation services.** Allow private companies to finance, develop and operate transportation projects and services. The private sector can often provide cost-effective facilities and services, as well as funding for large-scale projects when public funds are lacking. (*Option 45*)
- **Create optional regional revenue sources.** Regions could select from different revenue options that are best suited to their population, economy and transportation goals. Revenue options could include: charges for miles driven; commuter parking tax on employers; tolls for use of congested roads with revenues used to construct new roads and transit services; vehicle license fees; local option sales tax; local option gas tax; and tax increment financing based on sales tax. (*Options 34 & 51*)
- **Keep funding sources predictable and at pace with the economy.** Dedicate new revenues to transportation improvements, including roads, ferries, freight, transit and trip reduction. Options include: authorizing an increase in the state sales tax; authorizing a sales tax on the underlying price of gas; shifting sales tax revenues generated by transportation-related sales from the general fund to transportation purposes; and increasing the state gas tax periodically to meet needs for basic maintenance, preservation and safety. (*Options 30 & 49*)
- **Restructure WSDOT and the Transportation Commission.** Changes could include: modifying the role of the transportation commission or eliminating it; having the governor appoint the secretary of transportation or electing the secretary; and increasing, decreasing or maintaining WSDOT’s responsibilities over roads and ferries. (*Options 17 & 21-23*)
- **Streamline the permitting process while still protecting the environment.** Eliminate duplicate permitting procedures and make better use of current environmental processes. Empower local governments with “certified agency” status to make final decisions on permits and avoid multiple reviews. Coordinate mitigation across all levels of governments. Allow regional organizations to approve EIS and GMA requirements. (*Options 57, 60, 62 & 63*)